



# ***Iowa Outdoors***

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**[www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)**

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**May 10, 2005**

1. Free Camping Weekend Starts May 13
2. Educators Recognized for Contribution to Youth and the Outdoors
3. Trumpeter Swans to be Released in Hamilton County on May 16
4. State Parks to Host Series of Public Meetings on Centralized Reservation System
5. Invasive Plants Threaten State Parks Natural Resources
6. Iowa Goose Hatch Reaches Peak – 2005 Production Above Average – by Lowell Washburn [electronic photo available]
7. Tree and Shrub Seedlings Still Available
8. Iowa Fishing Report

## **FREE CAMPING WEEKEND STARTS MAY 13**

DES MOINES – Campers across Iowa are making plans to enjoy a weekend of free camping in Iowa State Parks, Recreation Areas and Forests May 13, 14 and 15. If the weather forecast holds, many of the popular park campgrounds will fill up quickly.

"Free camping weekend will be handled just like any other busy holiday weekend in state parks," says Sherry Arntzen, with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) state parks bureau. It might be a good idea, Arntzen said, for campers to call ahead before heading to the park to see if sites are still available, and if not, they might want to consider trying a new park.

"There are a number of park gems located throughout the state that highlight some of Iowa's most beautiful landscapes," she said.

Again this year, all participating state parks will have interpretive programs offered throughout the weekend. For example, campers can learn about nocturnal animals at Geode State Park in Henry County; Giotaku (ancient Japanese folk art of painting fish) at Lake Manawa State Park in Pottawattamie County; bird watching at Pilot Knob in Winnebago County or watch a fisheries demonstration with the electroshocking boat at Green Valley State Park in Union County. Campers and local area residents

interested in attending the interpretive program, should either call the park office directly or visit the state parks website for information on the program content, times and locations.

All DNR managed state parks, recreation areas and forest campgrounds with the exception of Bellevue are participating. Bellevue campground is closed due to a campground renovation. Lake Keomah State Park will participate; however, a portion of the campground remains closed for an electrical upgrade project. For a complete listing of the participating state parks, recreation areas and forests and other information about the weekend, visit the state park website at [www.exploreiowaparks.com](http://www.exploreiowaparks.com).

Camping in Iowa State Parks is on a first-come, first-serve basis with no reservations accepted. Iowa campers will need to register as usual with the exception of paying for the campsite. If Iowans show up on Thursday before the free weekend to register, they will need to pay for Thursday night. Nonresidents will need to pay the appropriate campsite fee during the weekend.

**For more information, contact Arntzen at 515-242-6233.**

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## **EDUCATORS RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTION TO YOUTH AND THE OUTDOORS**

DES MOINES – Lyle Lundgren, a teacher at MOC-Floyd Valley High School in Orange City, is the 2005 recipient of the *Brass Bluegill Award*. The award is presented each year to an instructor who has established an outstanding local program that exemplifies the goals of *Fish Iowa!*

Lundgren was among 30 educators who piloted the *Fish Iowa!* basic spincasting module in February 1990. Back then, Lundgren was teaching fifth and sixth grades. In 1992, he moved to MOC-Floyd Valley High School in Orange City where he teaches it in P.E. He has also used *Fish Iowa!* with the upper elementary students at MOC-Floyd Valley prior to their annual field trip to the Springbrook Conservation Education Center, near Guthrie Center. Lundgren has involved more than 3,200 students, and incorporates field archery, orienteering, rock-climbing and rappelling in his classes.

Lundgren was interested in teaching *Fish Iowa!* because "...of the opportunity to teach a life time skill like fishing to my students, but to also develop an interest in the environment and the outdoors, using fishing as an introduction," he said. He works with local DNR conservation officers and county conservation boards to organize the lessons and field trips. Freshmen and sophomores spend a half-day fishing at a nearby pond. Juniors and seniors visit Mills Creek State Park in Paullina where they not only fish, but also play softball, volleyball and "Ultimate Frisbee." Chaperones include teachers,

parents, grandparents, and local college students. The upper classmen give back by doing a clean-up at the park.

Lundgren shares his enthusiasm and expertise outside the classroom. He uses *Fish Iowa!* with Boy Scouts on camping trips and to help them earn their fishing merit badge. He also has assisted with training workshops for other educators and youth leaders so they can teach the unit.

In 1992, Orv Otten, an instructor at Northwestern College, in Orange City, began working with the DNR to provide training in *Fish Iowa!* for his students – future P.E. teachers. Otten uses it in his “Teaching of Sports” class. The same class includes units on how to teach cricket, eclipse ball, team handball, and other “unique” games. Since 1995, Lundgren has team taught the *Fish Iowa!* unit. Future teachers get practical, hands-on experience tying knots and casting. They also learn how to teach fishing and water safety to elementary and secondary students, from classroom to field experiences. The course is taught every other year. Lundgren and Otten have taught the unit to more than 100 future teachers. Both enjoy the outdoors and helping others share it with youth.

Lundgren will receive the Brass Bluegill award, along with a set of 24 spinning rods and reels donated by Pure Fishing, from Spirit Lake, at the May 12 meeting of the Natural Resource Commission, in Des Moines. Otten will also be recognized for his efforts to teach fishing and for introducing youth to the outdoors.

The *Brass* Bluegill award has been co-sponsored by Pure Fishing and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Education Program since 1997. Pure Fishing is committed to inspiring people to go fishing and helping them learn how to fish, where to fish, and what fishing tackle to use. Pure Fishing is the parent company of Berkley, Abu Garcia, Fenwick, Red Wolf, Mitchell, Johnson, Spider, Coleman Family Fishing, and Toby. The world headquarters is in Spirit Lake. *Fish Iowa!* strives to create safe anglers and responsible stewards of Iowa’s aquatic resources.

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## **TRUMPETER SWANS TO BE RELEASED IN HAMILTON COUNTY ON MAY 16**

CLEAR LAKE - The Iowa DNR will release six trumpeter swans in Hamilton County (rain or shine) on May 16.

The first release will take place at the southeast side of Anderson Lake at 10:15 a.m. Driving directions from Jewell: Travel 1 mile east on Hwy #175, Turn left on Saratoga Ave. and travel north ½ mile. The second release will take place at Bjorkboda Marsh at 11:30 a.m. Driving directions from Stanhope: Travel 4 miles south on Hwy #17, Turn right on 390<sup>th</sup> street and travel west 1 mile, turn left on Impaduka Ave and

travel south 1 mile, turn right on 400<sup>th</sup> street and travel ¼ mile west. The third release will take place on the south side of Gordon's Marsh, with a special memorial dedication to Philip Gordon. Driving directions from Webster City: Travel 4½ miles south on Blacktop #R27, turn right on 280<sup>th</sup> street and travel west 2 miles, turn right on the farm drive and travel ¼ mile north.

The public is invited to attend. The event includes a 15-minute swan/wetland presentation, a unique opportunity to touch and view the swans up close, and a historic photo opportunity with the kids. As the largest North American waterfowl, these magnificent all-white birds can weigh up to 36 pounds with an 8-foot wingspan.

Trumpeter swans were once common in Iowa, but were gone from the state by the late 1800s. By the early 1930s, only 69 swans remained in the lower 48 states. The trumpeter swans being released are part of the DNR's statewide trumpeter swan restoration effort, with hopes that they will help restore a wild free flying population to Iowa.

Since 1995, more than 500 free flying trumpeter swans have been released into the wild statewide. The goal is to have 25 free flying nesting pairs of trumpeter swans in Iowa by 2006. Public support is key to achieving this objective.

A special thanks to Hamilton County Conservation Board and to the Sampson family for their generous support of the Iowa Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program, in memory of David A. and Robert Lugan Sampson. If you have any questions about this release contact Ron Andrews at 641-357-3517. E-mail: [Ron.Andrews@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:Ron.Andrews@dnr.state.ia.us).

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## **STATE PARKS TO HOST SERIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS ON CENTRALIZED RESERVATION SYSTEM**

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources state parks bureau is hosting a series of public meetings to discuss a centralized reservation system for campgrounds and cabins in Iowa state parks, recreation areas and forests.

Seven public meetings will be held throughout the state to provide the public an opportunity to learn about the work to develop the reservation system as well as provide an opportunity for public input. The input received will be used to finalize the framework of the system, which is essential in development of a quality reservation system. The DNR is looking at having the system up and running in January 2006 for cabin rentals and sometime in February 2006 for camping.

All meetings are scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. The public meeting dates and locations are as follows:

May 31        Gull Point State Park lodge (Dickinson County)

June 2        Pin Oak Marsh (Lucas County) Lucas County Conservation Board office  
1 mile south of Chariton on Highway 14

June 7        Backbone State Park lodge (Delaware County)

June 8        Pine Lake State Park lodge (Hardin County)

June 9        Walnut Woods State Park lodge (Polk County)

June 14       Stanton Community Center (Montgomery County)  
205 Broad Avenue

June 16       Brighton Community Center (Washington County)  
City Hall – 101 East Washington Street

Information about the reservation project is posted on the parks' website at  
[www.exploreiowaparks.com](http://www.exploreiowaparks.com) or  
[http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/special\\_projects/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/special_projects/index.html).

**Contact person: Sherry Arntzen, State Parks Bureau 515/242-6233**

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## **INVASIVE PLANTS THREATEN STATE PARKS NATURAL RESOURCES**

LAKE VIEW – Managing Iowa state parks involves a lot more than clearing fire rings and knowing the latest fishing report. State parks have delicate ecosystems that need to be understood and protected for future park users.

Non-native, invasive plants are the number one threat to the natural resources in Iowa's state parks. State parks are often home to many threatened and endangered plants and animals and parks staff are expected to protect these species from extinction.

“Understory plants like garlic mustard threaten the native understory in natural parks, like Ledges, Mines of Spain and Stone,” said Kevin Pape, Iowa Department of Natural Resources state parks district supervisor in northwest Iowa. Volunteers and DNR staff battle garlic mustard each spring. “If this plant is not controlled, carpets of native wildflowers will be a thing of the past.”

At Stone State Park, near Sioux City, leafy spurge is an invasive plant that thrives in the Loess Hills prairie and responds positively to prescribed fire. "A flea beetle was introduced to the park as a biocontrol for leafy spurge about five years ago," Pape said. "The flea beetle is a natural enemy to leafy spurge, feeding on the root system and slowly depriving the plant of its energy."

Each park has its own ecosystem and faces its own threats. There are a number of opportunities in the spring and summer for volunteers to help with tree planting, nature mapping, assisting with prairie rescue and other projects in Iowa state parks.

**For more information, contact Pape at 712-657-2638.**

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[electronic photo available]

## **IOWA GOOSE HATCH REACHES PEAK --- 2005 PRODUCTION ABOVE AVERAGE**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

DES MOINES--The majority of this year's crop of giant Canada goose goslings are already out and swimming. For local honker flocks, it is the earliest hatch ever recorded. And although goose babies still have a long way to go until the end of the summer, things are looking good for Iowa's most popular waterfowl. Good to above average goose production is the prediction for the 2005 nesting season.

"This spring's nesting effort was at least a full week ahead of average," said DNR state waterfowl biologist, Guy Zenner.

"The first broods of goslings were already out of the nest by April 15, which is the earliest we've ever documented. One of the most exciting developments is that Canada geese are continuing a strong expansion into the farm pond regions of southern Iowa," said Zenner. "Farmers are constructing farm ponds at very significant rate and many of those ponds are several acres in size. Nesting geese are taking note and have begun to plug into that unused habitat. When we flew this year's spring goose breeding survey, we noted one or two Canada goose nests on virtually every single farm pond that contained an island or artificial nesting structure. Southern Iowa's potential for [goose] production appears only to be limited by how many goose nesting structures people are willing to build."

On the more traditional wetlands of north-central and northwest Iowa, spring goose populations remained strong. Although there was some flooding loss due to extremely heavy rainfalls that hit the region on April 11 and April 12, overall production from northern Iowa is expected to be at least average.

"I think that things are looking extremely positive for the future of Canada goose hunting in Iowa," said Zenner. "Our birds have become well distributed, and people no longer have to travel great distances to hunt geese in the extreme northern portion of the state. Nesting Canadas continue to spread into new habitats statewide and, in the future, will provide tremendous recreational opportunities."

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## **TREE AND SHRUB SEEDLINGS STILL AVAILABLE**

Although spring is progressing fast, there is still time to order trees and shrubs for reforestation, wildlife habitat or to control soil erosion on acreages or farms. Recent rains are creating favorable planting conditions and it is best if plantings are completed by mid to late May.

"There are excellent supplies at the State Forest Nursery of native red, white, bur and swamp oak, walnut, silver maple, dogwood, wild plum and many other species," said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau. These native trees and shrubs are adapted to Iowa's extremes in weather, to Iowa's soils and provide superior wildlife habitat, he said.

Conservation trees and shrubs are for sale by the State Forest Nursery at the cost of production. Prices range from \$25/100 plants for evergreen species, such as white pine, to \$45/100 plants for hardwood trees and shrubs like the oaks and redosier dogwood. The minimum order is 500 plants.

Several specialty packets designed in cooperation with the Iowa Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever and Audubon Iowa are available for conservation plantings as well. "These specialty packets contain 20 to 200 seedlings and sell from \$20 to \$90 and are great for improving wildlife and songbird habitat on your acreage," Walkowiak said.

For more information or to order conservation trees and shrubs, call 1-800-865-2477 or [www.iowatreeplanting.com](http://www.iowatreeplanting.com)

**For more information, contact Walkowiak at 515-242-5966.**

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